Community Impact Grant 2019/20

Meet Rachel.

In 2019, at the beginning of the Texas Health Community Impact grant, Connections Project, Rachel became a familiar face who welcomed clients to the community center in Kemp each morning. Her loyal following of low-income seniors came every day for breakfast, activities, and lunch.

Then COVID-19 hit, and Rachel's role changed overnight. The Connections Project program, which addresses depression and food insecurity for seniors in high-need Kaufman County ZIP codes, had to adjust.

Rachel and the Connections Project lead organization – Senior Connect – quickly pivoted to home-delivered meals. But a new need emerged as isolated clients hinted that they were depressed. As a result, the Connections Project gave seniors tablets and encouraged them to stay in touch with family, friends, and doctors.

Fortunately, the Connections Project was already offering the Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives (PEARLS), an evidence-based program to address depression. With Rachel trained as a PEARLS coach, she was soon able to see the difference it made for her community center guests.

Connections Project

Kemp 75143, Mabank 75147, and Elmo/Terrell 75161, within Kaufman County

To address the local priorities identified by Texas Health, Connections Project led a collaborative project to address depression and social isolation and increase access to healthy food for low-income adults ages 55+ by implementing PEARLS (Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives) and leveraging their network to enhance social services.

- Obtained tablets and data plans at reduced rates for seniors.
- Created infrastructure to connect organizations through a county-wide resource app.
- Constructed two-mile walking trail with volunteers from Kemp Community Servants.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Decrease depression by one stage of severity as measured by a reliable tool, such as the Patient Health Questionaire-9 (PHQ-9), among low-income individuals age 55+ by December 2020.
- Address food insecurity as a social determinant of health concern within low-income individuals age 55+ by increasing the number of places offering healthy foods by December 2020.

Texas Health considers the $300,000 grant awarded to the collaborative as seed money as further financial support is generated in the communities to meet long-term goals.

The grant was designed and launched in a pre-pandemic world. COVID-19 has had a significant impact on grant objectives and execution. Although the collaboration made adjustments to planned activities because of the pandemic, the grant's success related to original goals was impacted.

COLLABORATING ORGANIZATIONS

Senior Connect

First Baptist Church of Kaufman

Dr. Joanne T. Radeke, Ph.D., M.S. Psy Pharm, Clinical Psychologist

Elmo Volunteer Fire Department

River of Life Church, Kemp

STAR Transit

The Center

Kemp Community Servants
Kaufman Independent School District
Sharing Community Resources Coalition of Kaufman County

IMPACT OF COVID-19

Shifted to virtual counseling instead of in-person

Cancelled in-person activities, pivoting to virtual options when possible

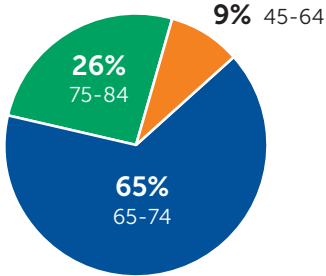As of Feb. 19, 2021, there were 12,201 confirmed cases in Kaufman County

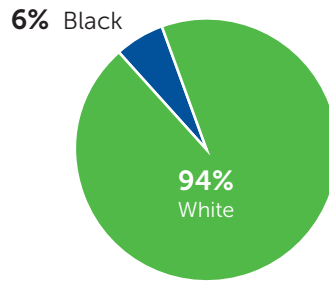# Kaufman County: 75143, 75147, 75161 – Connections Project
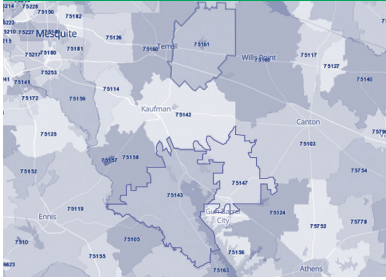
Data used to analyze ZIP codes and determine the areas of focus in each Texas Health Community Impact region are included within the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA), available at **TexasHealth.org/CommunityHealth/Community-Health-Needs-Assessment**. Insight into the 2019-2020 grant is below.

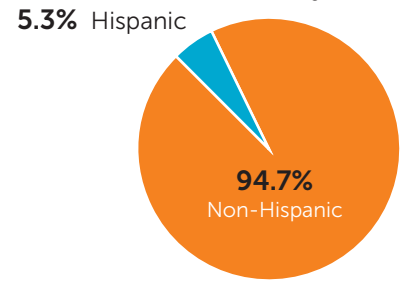## Demographic Information for 132 Grant Participants

Age Group
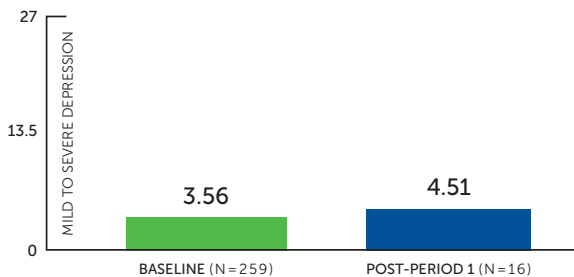- **9%** 45-64
- **26%** 75-84
- **65%** 65-74

Race
- **6%** Black
- **94%** White

Ethnicity
- **5.3%** Hispanic
- **94.7%** Non-Hispanic

Program Outcomes for 259 Grant Participants

Measuring Impact on Depression
Using the Patient Health Questionnaire - 9 (PHQ-9) Assessment Tool

Chart — MILD TO SEVERE DEPRESSION (y-axis: 0, 13.5, 27):
- BASELINE (N=259): 3.56
- POST-PERIOD 1 (N=16): 4.51

Initially, 259 participants completed the baseline data (Time 1). 16 (6.2%) participants completed the assessment at post-period 1, no assessment score was reported for post-period 2. Yielding an attrition rate of 100%. The results show no improvement in depression severity at post-period 1 (M = 4.51) when compared to baseline (M = 3.56).

The high attrition rate, unintended consequences, and limitations in data collection impacted the ability to determine whether the changes observed were statistically significant.

Objective for Decreasing Depression Unmet
The grant was not able to quickly adjust to the challenges created by the pandemic and was not able to reach an adequate number of people or demonstrate a reduction in depression scores.

Objective for Addressing Food Insecurity Unmet
Prior to COVID, the grant established two congregate meal sites and was on pace to exceed the objective. However, as noted above, the adjustment to the pandemic-related restrictions was slow, resulting in an unmet grant objective.

Social Determinants of Health Activities

Access to Behavioral Health Services
580 individuals were screened for depression using the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) assessment tool

114 individuals received behavioral health/mental health counseling

10 staff and volunteers were trained on administering in-home counseling program PEARLS (Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives)

Social Isolation
9 seniors engaged in "pen pal" program with Kaufman ISD students

Food Insecurity
429 individuals received meals at monthly congregate sites

378 individuals received monthly food distribution

161 individuals received nutrition education from a registered dietitian

Access to Health Services
10 Grand Care Systems Information portals were deployed in households of dual-eligible community residents to promote better home health care and effective health monitoring

Transportation
6,680 total one-way trips provided to program participants

Of those, **54.3%** were for medical care purposes

45.7% were for health programs or events

Texas Health

MB 3101 3/21 EP